

Does Campus Diversity lead to Diversity in On-Campus Intimate Relationships and Closer Diverse Friendships?

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Abstract

While campus diversity is seen as an important part of the overall experience of college students, little research has examined whether it actually leads to close interracial friendships and romantic relationships. Undergraduates from an ethnically diverse campus (N = 155), and an homogenous campus (N = 51) completed a brief questionnaire asking about their romantic partners, and closeness to their three best friends on campus. Although students on the diverse campus reported significantly higher rates of interracial dating (36.8% versus 14.8 %), most had met their romantic partners off campus. The prevalence of diverse friendships did not differ on the two campuses (36.6% versus 34.5 %), and most students on the diverse campus characterized their closest interracial friendships as just a friend from class. The incidence of diverse friendships was not related to years spent on campus. Findings suggest that campus diversity may not be enough to promote diversity in student relationships.

Key Words: Campus diversity, friendships, romantic relationships, interracial dating

1. Introduction

It is widely believed that exposure to diversity plays an important part in affecting the overall experience of college students. Most of the research in this area has focused on the educational benefits associated with attending an ethnically diverse campus, such as greater leadership skills, academic achievement and intellectual development (e.g. critical thinking skills), and more importantly, a better understanding and appreciation of the similarities and differences among people from diverse cultural backgrounds (American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors, 2000; Antonio et al., 2004; Hurtado, 1996; Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001).

Interpersonal relationships are a key aspect of college life, and another benefit of attending an ethnically diverse campus is the opportunity to interact socially with persons from another ethnicity. In fact, interaction with a culturally different other underlies much of the benefit associated with attending a racially diverse institution (Astin, 1993; Smith et al., 1997). As a result, the effects of campus diversity on student interactions has been increasingly studied for the past decade (e.g. Antonio, 2001, 2004; Chang, 1999; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Hu & Kuh, 2003).

Chang and colleagues (Chang, 1999; Chang et al., 2004) explored whether or not ethnic diversity in college promoted the opportunity for socializing with people from other ethnicities, and in a follow-up study explored whether the frequency of different forms of interracial interactions between students such as dining, studying, and dating, can be beneficial to the intellectual, social, and psychological aspects of student development during their four years of college.

The authors found that greater diversity in student bodies was associated with more frequent interracial interactions among students, and that interacting with students from ethnically diverse backgrounds was associated with positive education outcomes and student development such as intellectual ability, social ability, and civic interest. However, the authors also reported differences in the nature of interracial interaction between Whites and minority students. They suggested that the more diverse a campus is, the more likely it is that Whites will study, dine, and date with students from another ethnic group. In contrast, minority students are more likely than White students to interact with students from different ethnic groups regardless of campus diversity (Chang et al., 2004) suggesting that the actual ratios between Whites and minorities on campus matters.

Few studies have examined the effects of ethnic diversity on students at a closer level of interaction – close friendships and intimate relationships – even though such relationships are of critical importance both to the college experience and later in life (Antonio, 2004; Fiebert, Nugent, Hershberger, & Kasdan, 2004; Fujino, 1997; Korgen, Mahon, & Wang, 2003). The important issue that arises is whether attending an ethnically diverse campus increases the chances that a student will become good friends with, or develop an intimate relationship with, a person of a different ethnicity.

Fujino (1997) argued that because of the significant number of Whites and Asian Americans attending the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), students from these two ethnic groups will have a closer proximity to one another, and also a greater opportunity to socialize outside of their own ethnic group. Accordingly, Fujino suggested that this *propinquity* should allow more chances for students to form an interracial dating relationship. Participants completed various questionnaires assessing their interracial dating patterns and attitudes, and were asked to indicate the number of times they had dated interracial and their preferences to date people from a certain ethnic background. Fujino found that propinquity was the strongest predictor of how likely one will date interracial. Specifically, she found that Asian Americans who grew up in a community that was predominantly White were more likely to date interracial, and this same pattern of dating reoccurred when these individuals entered a similar college environment.

Diversity in friendships is also related to propinquity in that students tend to become close friends with those with whom they socialize daily (Antonio, 2004). While an ethnically diverse campus allows greater opportunity to socialize outside of one's own ethnicity, Antonio suggests that students tend not to intentionally choose to make friends with students of an ethnicity different from their own. Rather, college students tend to become best friends with those who they "hang out" with the most, especially during their freshman year. For example, their best friends tend to be their college roommate who they go to class with, and study with, every day. When a student purposely seeks friendships with other ethnic groups, Antonio (2004) suggests this may be due to the student's openness to diversity with others of different cultural backgrounds. Hence, a person's attitude and perception towards ethnic diversity can also be a contributing factor to having relationships – other than just friends – from diverse ethnic groups.

While being in a diverse environment can promote opportunities to meet people of a different ethnicity, it is also possible that an ethnically diverse campus may not promote diversity in relationships at all. In fact, Korgen et al., (2003) found that student segregation may actually increase on a diverse campus partly because of the high number of ethnic minorities. Specifically, the authors found that when on campus Whites at an ethnically diverse campus date interracial, their partner is least likely to be African American because of a "tipping effect" – the high number of African Americans (23%) at the institution made it easier for those minority students to date each other. This tipping effect did not happen at the less diverse campus. Furthermore, Korgen et al. also found that those students who spent less time at a diverse institution and who lived off-campus viewed interracial relationships as more positive, and they were also more likely to benefit from interracial interactions. In contrast, students who lived on-campus and spent more time at a diverse institution were less likely to date interracial (Korgen et al., 2003). Therefore, college students may not form friendships or romantic relationships with someone of an ethnicity different from their own at a high rate in spite of being in a diverse atmosphere (Yancy, 2002).

Similarly, other researchers have found that greater campus diversity may not benefit education, and may lead to more segregation, discrimination, and conflicts among students from diverse backgrounds rather than promote diversity in friendships and intimate relationships (Antonio, 1999; Fiebert et al., 2004; Rothman, Lipset, & Nevitte, 2003; Wood & Sherman, 2001).

Though many college students today are quick to say that their friendship networks are diverse and that they are more accepting of interracial dating than their parents' generation, they are still often segregated by race and ethnicity – one just has to walk through the seating area of most college cafeterias to find the evidence.

It remains unclear whether being on an ethnically diverse campus environment actually leads to increased diversity in romantic relationships and friendships formed on campus, and how close the diverse friendships made on campus actually are. This is an area that is crucial to research on cultural diversity but has not been fully addressed. The present study investigated whether attending a more ethnically diverse campus, California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA) as opposed to a less ethnically diverse campus, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO) promotes diversity in student romantic relationships and friendships. Table 1 presents student enrollment by ethnicity at Cal State LA and Cal Poly SLO in 2004 (CSU Division of Analytic Studies, 2004). While 73.8% of students at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo are White, Whites make up only 15.2% of the student body at Cal State LA. The difference in the prevalence of minority student enrollment between these two campuses provides a good indication of how ethnically diverse the student body at Cal State LA is seen in comparison to Cal Poly SLO. It is hypothesized that if students attend the more ethnically diverse campus, their intimate partners are more likely to be of an ethnicity other than their own than is the case with students at the more homogeneous campus. It is further hypothesized that there will be a higher incidence of interracial friendships among students attending the more ethnically diverse campus.

It is possible that on a diverse campus, students may form many interracial friendships but may limit their degree of interaction with these friends such that they remain only a friend from class. It may simply be human nature for people to become close friends with those who are most similar to them (Antonio, 2004). The present study also examines the Level of Intimacy (*Very Close, Close, or Just a Friend from Class*) of students' First, Second, and Third best on-campus friendships (Friendship Rank). It is hypothesized that the level of intimacy of on-campus friendships will differ depending on whether the friends are from the same or different ethnic background. Finally, it is hypothesized that the longer a student attends the ethnically diverse campus, the more likely it is that the student will have close friends who are of a different ethnicity from his/her own. Findings from the present study can contribute to our knowledge and understanding of whether campus diversity promotes interracial friendships and relationships, or whether diversity promotes segregation in student relationships.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

One hundred and fifty-five (92 female and 63 male) undergraduates from Cal State LA and 51 (33 female and 18 male) undergraduates from Cal Poly SLO volunteered to participate in the study without pay. The Cal State LA sample included 15 African Americans, 15 Asian Americans, 7 Filipinos, 65 Mexican Americans, 20 Other Latinos, 15 Whites, 15 other ethnicities, and 3 unreported. The Cal Poly SLO sample included 1 African American, 4 Asian Americans, 1 Filipino, 5 Mexican Americans, 2 Latinos, 37 Whites, and 1 other ethnicity.

2.2 Measures

Participants completed a short (18 item) self-report that asked for demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, current year of study, languages spoken, SES, length of time on campus, how long living in the U.S., their opinion of how ethnically diverse they find their campus, and about their relationships with friends and romantic partners. Diversity of romantic relationships was measured with two items which asked 1) the ethnicity of the participant's partner if the participant is in a committed relationship, and 2) whether the student met his/her partner on campus. Diversity of friendships was measured with 4 items. Participants were asked to indicate the following about their first, second, and third best friends on campus: 1) the ethnicity of their friends, 2) the country (other than the U.S.) that their friends identify with, if any, 3) whether they met these friends on campus, and 4) how intimate they are with these friends – *Very Close, Close, or Just a Friend from Class*.

2.3 Procedure

Participants were recruited from upper-level psychology classes. The questionnaire took approximately five minutes to complete, and had a return rate of approximately 95%. Four *matching variables* were created that illustrated whether participants' romantic relationship and First, Second, and Third closest friends on campus were from within or outside their own ethnic group.

For each matching variable, participants were assigned a *no match* (0) if the ethnicity of their partner or friends did not match their own. In contrast, participants were assigned a *match* (1) if the ethnicity of their partner or friends matched their own.

3. Results

The samples did not differ by gender, or in the number of years they had lived in the United States. On average, participants at Cal Poly SLO had been enrolled longer than participants at Cal State LA (2.8 vs. 1.6 years, $t(203) = -6.01$, $p < .01$), and were also younger than participants at Cal State LA (23.4 vs. 26.7 years, $t(201) = 2.93$, $p < .05$). Further, average family incomes were approximately \$20,000 higher at Cal Poly SLO than at Cal State LA ($t(196) = 4.761$, $p < .05$). Most importantly, the ethnicity of the participants at each campus was significantly different, ($\chi^2(6, N = 203) = 80.511$, $p < .01$).

3.1 Perceptions of Campus diversity

Participants at Cal State LA rated their campus as significantly more diverse on a scale of 1-10 ($M = 8.10$, $SD = 1.74$) than participants at Cal Poly SLO ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.62$) ($t(203) = 18.19$, $p < .01$).

3.2 Diversity of Romantic Relationships

The percentage of participants dating interracially at Cal State LA was significantly higher (36.8%) than those at Cal Poly SLO (14.8%) ($\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 4.691$, $p < .05$). However, at Cal State LA, only 3% of participants in diverse romantic relationships reported meeting their partner on campus.

3.3 Years on Campus and Diversity of Friendships at Cal State LA

Only those friendships that were formed on campus were examined. Chi-square analyses revealed that participants' likelihood of forming *diverse* friendships on campus did not differ significantly depending on how long they had been attending Cal State LA.

3.4 Diversity of Friendships

The racial diversity of ALL friendships formed on campus reported by the samples were initially compared, and no significant difference was found ($\chi^2(1, N = 461) = .188$, $p > .05$). At Cal State LA, 36.6% of reported friendships were diverse as compared to 34.5 % at Cal Poly SLO. The data, broken down by Friendship Rank were as follows: Looking at participants' first ranked friends (i.e. "best" friends on campus), there was a higher percentage of diverse friendships at Cal Poly SLO than there was at Cal State LA (39.6% vs. 27.0%). In contrast, among participants' second ranked friendships on campus, there were more diverse friendships at Cal State LA than there were at Cal Poly SLO (41.5% vs. 28.3%). Similarly, among participants' third ranked friendships on each campus, there were more diverse friendships at Cal State LA in comparison to Cal Poly SLO (44.4% vs. 35.6%). Though the differences were not statistically significant, it appears that a student's first ranked ("best") friend is *more* likely to be of his/her *own* ethnicity at Cal State LA than at Cal Poly SLO, but the reverse holds true for second and third ranked friends.

3.5 Degree of Intimacy of Diverse Friendships

A series of Chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine the Degree of Intimacy of diverse on-campus friendships - *Very Close*, *Close*, or *Just a Friend from Class*. The data is shown in Table 2.

3.51 Degree of Intimacy of first ranked diverse friendships. The degree of intimacy for the first ranked (or "best") friendships made on campus of a different ethnicity differed significantly at each campus ($\chi^2(2, N = 36) = 6.577$, $p < .05$). A higher percentage of participants at Cal Poly SLO (58.3%) than at Cal State LA (16.7%) considered their first ranked friends whom they met on campus and who were of an ethnicity different from their own as *Very Close*. Furthermore, a higher percentage of participants at Cal State LA (29.2%) than at Cal Poly SLO (16.7%) considered their first ranked diverse friends they met on campus as *Close*. Even for the first ranked diverse friends, a higher percentage of participants at Cal State LA (54.2%) than at Cal Poly SLO (25.0%) considered these friendships as *Just a Friend from Class*.

3.52 Degree of Intimacy of second ranked diverse friendships. The degree of intimacy of second ranked diverse friendships made on campus also differed significantly at each campus ($\chi^2(2, N = 48) = 11.143$, $p < .05$). A significantly higher percentage of participants at Cal Poly SLO (25.0%) than at Cal State LA (0%) considered their second ranked diverse friendships made on campus as *Very Close*.

There was also a higher percentage of participants from Cal Poly SLO (50.0%) than at Cal State LA (41.7%) who considered the second ranked diverse friends they met on campus as *Close*. There was a significantly higher percentage of participants from Cal State LA (58.3%) who considered their second ranked diverse friendships as *Just a Friend from Class* than at Cal Poly SLO (25.0%).

3.53 Degree of Intimacy of third ranked diverse friendships. The degree of intimacy of the third ranked diverse friendships made on campus also differed significantly at each campus, $\chi^2(2, N = 47) = 17.037, p = .00$. A significantly higher percentage of participants at Cal Poly SLO (35.7%) in comparison to Cal State LA (0%) considered their third ranked friends of a different ethnicity as *Very Close*. Similarly, a higher percentage of participants at Cal Poly SLO (42.9%) than at Cal State LA (27.3%) considered the third ranked diverse friends they met on campus as *Close*. Results also showed that a significantly higher percentage of participants considered their third ranked diverse friends as *Just a Friend from Class* at Cal State LA (72.7%) than at Cal Poly SLO (21.4%).

In summary, when intimacy of diverse on-campus friendships was examined, the Cal State LA participants, overall, described these friendships as less close regardless of friendship rank than the Cal Poly SLO participants. In fact, no CSULA participants reported being very close with any of their second and third ranked friends on campus that were diverse.

3.6 Degree of Intimacy of Non-diverse Friendships

To further investigate the closeness of friendships at each campus, and for comparison, a series of Chi-square tests of independence were performed on the data obtained for non-diverse friendships on each campus (see Table 3). Once again, the results showed that the degree of intimacy of non-diverse friendships differed significantly at each campus for the first ranked (or “best”) non-diverse friends ($\chi^2(2, N = 63) = 18.328, p = .00$), second ranked non-diverse friends ($\chi^2(2, N = 62) = 28.250, p = .00$), and third ranked non-diverse friends ($\chi^2(2, N = 57) = 27.461, p = .00$).

3.61 Degree of intimacy of first ranked non-diverse friendships. A significantly higher percentage of participants considered their first ranked (or “best”) non-diverse friends on campus as *Very Close* at Cal Poly SLO (75.0%) than at Cal State LA (25.6%). In contrast, a significantly lower percentage of participants considered their first ranked non-diverse friends as *Just a Friend from Class* at Cal Poly SLO (0.0%) than at Cal State LA (51.2%). Approximately the same percentage of participants considered their first ranked non-diverse friends as *Close* at Cal Poly SLO (25.0%) and at Cal State LA (23.3%).

3.62 Degree of intimacy of second ranked non-diverse friendships. A similar pattern was found for the second ranked non-diverse friendships formed on campus. A significantly higher percentage of participants considered their second ranked non-diverse friends as *Very Close* at Cal Poly SLO (48.0%) than at Cal State LA (2.7%). A higher percentage of participants at Cal Poly SLO (48.0%) than at Cal State LA (35.1%) also considered the second ranked non-diverse friends they met on campus as *Close*. In contrast, a significantly lower percentage of participants considered their second ranked non-diverse friends as *Just a Friend from Class* at Cal Poly SLO (4.0%) than at Cal State LA (62.2%).

3.63 Degree of intimacy of third ranked non-diverse friendships. There was a significantly higher percentage of participants from Cal Poly SLO (28.0%) who considered their third ranked non-diverse friends as *very close* than at Cal State LA (3.1%). A significantly higher percentage of participants also considered their third ranked non-diverse friends as *close* at Cal Poly SLO (68.0%) than at Cal State LA (25.0%). In contrast, a significantly higher percentage of participants at Cal State LA (71.9%) than at Cal Poly SLO (4.0%) considered their third ranked non-diverse friends as *just a friend from class*. Overall, the data suggested that participants feel closer to their friends of the same ethnicity, and once again, that Cal Poly SLO students are closer to their on-campus friends than students at Cal State LA.

3.7 Majority versus Minority Group Friendships

The differences between friendships formed by majority and minority students on both campuses was examined. Significant differences were found in the level of diversity of on-campus friendships of the Hispanic majority (Mexican American and Latino) and all other ethnicities in the sample within Cal State LA, ($\chi^2(1, N = 322) = 13.505, p = .00$). Students from Hispanic backgrounds were more likely to form friendships within their own ethnic groups (71.6%) than outside (28.4%).

Other students (Non-Hispanics) tended to form friendships within (51.5%) and outside (48.5%) of their own ethnic group at about the same rate. Friendships at Cal Poly SLO were also examined by comparing the friendships of the White majority and all other ethnicities in the sample. The data showed significant differences in the overall friendships between Whites and all other ethnicities within Cal Poly SLO, ($\chi^2(1, N = 139) = 43.089, p = .00$). A significantly higher percentage of Whites tended to form friendships within rather than outside their own ethnic group (82.0% vs. 18.0%). In contrast, other students (Non-Whites) at Cal Poly tend to form friendships outside of their own ethnic group rather than within (76.9% vs. 23.1%). In summary, the data suggests majority students are more likely to form friendships within their own ethnic groups on both campuses, but minorities make more diverse friendships when on a *less diverse* campus.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated whether attending an ethnically diverse university (Cal State LA) as opposed to a more ethnically homogenous campus (Cal Poly SLO) would promote diversity in student romantic relationships and friendships. The significantly higher number of minority students at Cal State LA, both enrolled in the university and present in the sample, indicated that it is a more ethnically diverse campus than Cal Poly SLO. Further, while students at Cal State LA perceived their campus as very diverse, students at Cal Poly SLO perceived their campus as not very diverse.

The results supported the first hypothesis that students who attend a more ethnically diverse campus are more likely to have a romantic partner that is of a different ethnic group. While 36.8% of students at Cal State LA were dating interracially, only 14.8% of students at Cal Poly SLO were in an interracial dating relationship. One explanation that accounts for this finding is that being in an ethnically diverse environment increases the chances of meeting people from different ethnic backgrounds, and therefore, students will be more likely to enter into an interracial romantic relationship (Fujino, 1997; Martin, Bradford, Drzewiecka, & Chitgopekar, 2003; Yancey, 2002). However, the results showed that the majority of students at both Cal State LA and Cal Poly SLO met their partner off campus. In fact, less than 3% of students at Cal State LA and 41% of students at Cal Poly SLO who are in an interracial romantic relationship actually met their partner at school. Rates were similar for students who were dating within their ethnic group. Perhaps being exposed to a diverse school environment like at Cal State LA does promote a better understanding of different cultures and more openness to diversity, which in turn produces a more positive attitude towards interracial dating and therefore an increased likelihood of forming an interracial romantic relationship, both on and off campus. It would be important though, to discover if these relationships were formed *even before* the students came to Cal State LA, suggesting an open attitude and positive perception toward diversity that preceded their time on campus (Antonio, 2004).

Results did not support the second hypothesis that students who attend a more ethnically diverse campus will be more likely to form interracial friendships than students who attend a less ethnically diverse campus. The prevalence of ethnically diverse friendships at both campuses was approximately 35%. Even when the students' first, second, and third ranked friendships were compared separately, prevalence of diverse friendships did not differ significantly between the two campuses. Further, among students' first ranked (or "best") friends, it was found that there were more diverse friendships at Cal Poly (the more ethnically homogenous campus) than at Cal State LA. In contrast, among students' second and third best friends, there were more diverse friendships at Cal State LA than at Cal Poly SLO. The data suggests that even though there were slightly more incidences of diverse friendships reported at the more diverse campus, students tended to consider these friends as only their *second* or *third* closest ones. On the other hand, students' *first* closest friendships – their very "best" friends – at an ethnically diverse campus are often from within their own ethnic group. Martin et al. (2003) suggested that although an ethnically diverse campus can promote friendships between students from different ethnic backgrounds, it is possible that these friendships may not be considered by the particular students as significant or as meaningful as when these friends are from the same ethnic group as theirs. In fact, the authors suggest that a person's ethnicity may be one of the major factors in determining whether close friendships will grow. The findings of the present study are consistent with the idea that people form closer relationships with those who are similar to them, and suggest that being in a diverse environment may have a lesser weight than being from the same ethnic background in the thriving of the very close, intimate, and cherished "best" friends on campus.

In further support of this possibility, results supported the third hypothesis that, depending on which campus the students attend, their three best friendships, both diverse and non-diverse, that they formed on campus will differ in the degree of intimacy – *very close*, *close*, or *just a friend from class*.

While the majority of students at the less ethnically diverse campus (Cal Poly SLO) considered their three best friends on campus as *close* or *very close*, the majority of students at the more ethnically diverse campus (Cal State LA) considered their three best friends as *just a friend from class*. Comparing diverse and non-diverse friendships, a greater proportion of participants reported feeling closer to their non-diverse friends on both campuses (See Fiebert et al., 2004).

Comparing campuses, Cal Poly SLO students were closer to their friends overall. One explanation for this finding may be due to the fact that Cal State LA is known as a commuter campus. Students at Cal State LA tend to go to class and leave quickly afterwards; consequently, very little time is available for closer levels of interactions with their friends. This tendency to “come and go” may have prevented the development of very close friendships at Cal State LA. The data suggests that for very close friendships to grow, a deeper and more frequent level of interaction may be necessary. For example, participating in meaningful school activities together and spending the time to talk about significant matters in life will certainly allow students to get to know their friends better and at a deeper level than just sitting next to one another during class (Antonio, 2001).

When comparing overall friendships among the Hispanic majority at Cal State LA and the White majority at Cal Poly SLO, it was found that both groups were more likely to have close friends within than outside of their own ethnic group. However, non-White students at Cal Poly SLO were significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Cal State LA students to form friendships with those from a different ethnic background than their own. These findings suggest that what increases diversity in on-campus friendships is not simply an increased exposure to, and opportunity to meet, people outside of one’s own cultural background, but an increased exposure to, and opportunity to meet, people outside of one’s own cultural background coupled with a limited chance to meet and interact with people from within one’s own culture. It appears then that ratios do matter (Chang et al., 2004), and that simply increasing the number of diverse students on a campus without ensuring support in fostering a diverse community can create a tipping effect (Korgen et al., 2003). When there are enough people around within one’s ethnic background to make friends with, the likelihood of forming friendships outside of one’s ethnic group, despite ample opportunity, is reduced (Chang et al., 2004; Korgen et al., 2003).

Results did not support the fourth hypothesis that the longer students attend an ethnically diverse campus like Cal State LA, the more likely it is that they will have close friends outside of their own ethnicity. Results indicated that the likelihood of forming close interracial friendships was not related to the number of years attending an ethnically diverse campus. Antonio (2004) suggested that mere contact or presence in a diverse environment may not necessarily promote the formation of close, intimate friendships with someone from a different ethnic group. As such, students can attend a diverse campus for several years without forming any friendships with someone from another ethnic background. This finding suggests that, in addition to just being in a diverse school environment, it may be possible that personal factors such as interests and attitudes toward interracial friendships, openness and willingness to seek friends outside of one’s own ethnic group, and cultural awareness can directly or indirectly influence students’ friendship choices.

Possible limitations need to be considered in the current study. Since only upper-year undergraduate students from two universities in California participated in the study, findings may only reflect student relationships at these two campuses and not those in other parts of the country. In addition, the students at Cal Poly SLO that participated in the study had been attending their campus longer. However, according to the present results, length of time on campus did not change the likelihood of forming diverse friendships. The students at Cal Poly SLO that participated in the study were also younger by several years. While younger students tend to be more liberal and should therefore be more open to diverse relationships (Todd, McKinney, Harris, & Chadderton, 1992), such a small age gap is unlikely to have affected the current findings.

The small Cal Poly SLO sample size at times prevented ethnicity differences between Cal Poly and Cal State LA from being analyzed further. It would be important to examine whether including a larger sample from a less ethnically diverse campus would significantly change the results. Finally, the fact that there was a lower average family income among students from Cal State LA indicates that these students are from a lower socioeconomic group and, as a result, are more likely to live in a more ethnically diverse neighborhood. These students may have already been in an interracial dating relationship even before they came to Cal State LA. Martin et al., (2003) found that respondents who grew up in diverse neighborhoods, had diverse acquaintance and friendship networks, and whose family members also dated interculturally were most likely to engage in intercultural dating.

Therefore, SES may provide an alternative explanation of why a greater number of diverse romantic relationships were found at Cal State LA.

Future research could also examine whether students formed their interracial dating relationships prior to attending college, and why student friendships were closer at a less diverse campus than at a more diverse one. As mentioned previously, one variable to consider is the fact that Cal State LA is considered to be commuter campus which reduces chances for frequent interaction (Antonio, 2001). Future research could examine only those students, both at an ethnically diverse and less diverse campus, who live in a student dormitory, allowing all members of the sample the same opportunity for closer and more frequent level of interaction. Collection of such data is already underway.

In conclusion, while the findings from the present study are arguably consistent with previous research that an ethnically diverse environment is related to the presence of diversity in romantic relationships, results suggest that students are no more likely to form diverse friendships when they attend a more ethnically diverse campus, and tend to be closer to their non-diverse friends. Further, students who find themselves in the minority on campus are more likely to have diverse friendships on a more ethnically homogenous campus. The mere presence of an ethnically diverse student body may not be enough to promote diversity in intimate relationships and close friendships, so it is important to implement effective programs and activities on campus that will facilitate greater and more meaningful interactions among students from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Mercurio, 2009-2010).

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Ethnicity	Cal State LA	Cal Poly SLO
African American	8.9	1.2
American Indian	0.4	0.9
Asian American	20.4	10.0
Filipino	4.0	2.6
Mexican American	35.9	7.8
Other Latino	14.8	3.3
Pacific Islander	0.3	0.5
White	15.2	73.8
Unknown	12.3	12.4
Non-Resident Alien	1.5	1.2

Table 1. Fall 2004 CSU Student Enrollment Figures by Ethnicity (Percentages).

Campus	Cal State LA	Cal Poly SLO
First ranked friend*		
Very close	16.7	58.3
Close	29.2	16.7
Just a Friend from Class	54.2	25.0
Second ranked friend*		
Very close	0.0	25.0
Close	41.7	50.0
Just a Friend from Class	58.3	25.0
Third ranked friend**		
Very Close	0.0	35.7
Close	27.3	42.9
Just a Friend from Class	72.7	21.4

* p < .05

** p < .001

Table 2. Degree of Intimacy of Diverse On-Campus Friendships (Percentages).

Campus	Cal State LA	Cal PolySLO
First ranked friend*		
Very Close	25.6	75.0
Close	23.3	25.0
Just a Friend from Class	51.2	0.0
Second ranked friend*		
Very Close	2.7	48.0
Close	35.1	48.0
Just a Friend from Class	62.2	4.0
Third ranked friend*		
Very close	3.1	28.0
Close	25.0	68.0
Just a Friend from Class	71.9	4.0

*p < .001

Table 3. Degree of Intimacy of Non-Diverse On-Campus Friendships (Percentages).